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A HERETIC SQUELOHED.

MR. EDITOR:

In the article on "Science in its Relation to Art," published in the present number of your Journal, I perceive that the writer does not apprehend the difference between the artist's science of *aspects* and mere abstract analytical science. Hence his mind is led into infinite confusion. He is equally incorrect and obscure in regard to the meaning of the word Art, evidently supposing that Art and *Fine Art* are identical.

He says there is no "disagreement" between Science and Art. Perhaps there is not; but certainly they have nothing in common. He says, "Science is knowledge; Art is *skill*. Art is the means and method of applying what we know," &c.

Now, without dwelling upon each separate error of his argument, I can hardly do better than to quote what Mr. Ruskin has written with regard to the relation between Science and Art, which, it seems to me, is quite exhaustive of the matter, and directly meets all the short-sightedness and error of the article in question.

"The grand mistake of the Renaissance schools lay in supposing that Science and Art were the same things, and that to advance in the one was necessarily to perfect the other; whereas they are, in reality, things not only different, but so opposed, that to advance in one, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, is to retrograde in the other. This is the point to which I would, at present, especially bespeak the reader's attention.

Science and Art are commonly distinguished by the nature of their actions; the one as knowing, the other as changing, producing, or creating. But there is a still more important distinction in the nature of the things they deal with. Science deals exclusively with things as they are in themselves;

and Art exclusively with things as they affect the human senses and the human soul. Her work is to portray the appearances of things, and to deepen the natural impressions which they produce upon living creatures. The work of Science is to substitute facts for appearances, and demonstrations for impressions. Both, observe, are equally concerned with truth; the one with truth of aspect, the other with truth of essence. Art does not represent things falsely, but truly, as they appear to mankind. Science studies the relations of things to each other; but Art studies only their relations to man; and it requires of everything which is submitted to it imperatively this, and only this—what that thing is to the human eyes and human heart, what it has to say to men, and what it can become to them: a field of question just as much vaster than that of Science, as the soul is larger than the material creation.

Take a single instance. Science informs us that the sun is ninety-five millions of miles distant from, and 111 times broader than, the earth; that we and all the planets revolve round it; and that it revolves on its own axis in 25 days 14 hours and 4 minutes. With all this Art has nothing whatever to do. It has no care to know anything of this kind; but the things which it does care to know are these, that in the heavens God has set a tabernacle for the sun, "which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

This, then, being the kind of truth with which Art is exclusively concerned, how is such truth as this to be ascertained and accumulated? Evidently, and only, by perception and feeling;

never either by reasoning or report. Nothing must come between nature and the artist's sight; nothing between God and the artist's soul. Neither calculation nor hearsay—be it the most subtle of calculations, or the wisest of sayings,—may be allowed to come between the universe and the witness which art bears to its visible nature. The whole value of that witness depends on its being eye-witness; the whole genuineness, acceptableness, and dominion of it depend on the personal assurance of the man who utters it. All its victory depends on the veracity of the one preceding word, "Vidi."

The whole function of the artist in the world is to be a seeing and feeling creature; to be an instrument of such tenderness and sensitiveness that no shadow, no hue, no line, no instantaneous and evanescent expression of the visible things around him, nor any of the emotions which they are capable of conveying to the spirit which has been given him, shall either be left unrecorded, or fade from the book of record. It is not his business either to think, to judge, to argue, to know. His place is neither in the closet, nor on the bench, nor at the bar, nor in the library. They are for other men and other work. He may think in a by-way; reason, now and then, when he has nothing better to do; know such fragments of knowledge as he can gather without stooping, or reach without pains; but none of these things are to be his care. The work of his life is to be two-fold only; to see, to feel.

Nay, but, the reader perhaps pleads with me, one of the great uses of knowledge is to open the eyes, to make things perceivable which never would have been seen unless first they had been known.

Not so. This would only be said or believed by those who do not know what the perceptive faculty of a great artist is, in comparison with that of

other men. There is no great painter, no great workman in any art, but he sees with a glance of a moment more than he could learn by the labor of a thousand hours. God has made every man fit for his work. He has given to the man whom He means for a student the reflective, logical, sequential faculties; and to the man whom He means for an artist the perceptive, sensitive, retentive faculties. And neither of these men, so far from being able to do the other's work, can even comprehend the way in which it is done. The student has no understanding of the vision, nor the painter of the process; but chiefly the student has no idea of the colossal grasp of the true painter's vision and sensibility.

The labor of the whole Geological Society, for the last fifty years, has but now arrived at the ascertainment of those truths respecting mountain form which Turner saw and expressed with a few strokes of a camel's-hair pencil fifty years ago, when he was a boy. The knowledge of all the laws of the planetary system, and of all the curves of motion of projectiles, would never enable the man of science to draw a waterfall or a wave; all the members of Surgeons' Hall helping each other could not at this moment see, or represent, the natural movement of a human body in vigorous action, as a poor dyer's son did two hundred years ago. (Tintoret).

But surely, it is still insisted, granting this peculiar faculty to the painter, he will still see more as he knows more, and the more knowledge he obtains, therefore, the better. No; not even so. It is indeed true, that here and there a piece of knowledge will enable the eye to detect a truth which might otherwise have escaped it; as, for instance, in watching a sunrise, the knowledge of the true nature of the orb may lead the painter to feel more profoundly, and

express more fully, the distance between the bars of cloud that cross it, and the sphere of flame that lifts itself slowly beyond them into the infinite heaven. But, for one visible truth to which knowledge thus opens the eyes, it seals them to a thousand: that is to say, if the knowledge occur to the mind so as to occupy its powers of contemplation at the moment when the sight-work is to be done, the mind retires inward, fixes itself upon the known facts, and forgets the passing visible ones; and a moment of such forgetfulness loses more to the painter than a day's thought can gain.

What, then, it may be asked indignantly, is an utterly ignorant and unthinking man likely to make the best artist? No, not so either. Knowledge is good for him so long as he can keep it utterly, servilely, subordinate to his own divine work, and trample it under his feet, and out of his way, the moment it is likely to entangle him.

And in this respect, observe, there is an enormous difference between knowledge and education. An artist need not be a *learned* man, in all probability it will be a disadvantage to him to become so; but he ought, if possible, always to be an educated man: that is, one who has understanding of his own uses and duties in the world, and therefore of the general nature of the things done and existing in the world; and who has so trained himself or been trained, as to turn to the best account whatever faculties or knowledge he has. The mind of an educated man is greater than the knowledge it possesses; it is like the vault of heaven, encompassing the earth which lives and flourishes beneath it, but the mind of an uneducated and learned man is like a caoutchouc band, with an everlasting spirit of contraction in it, fastening together papers which it cannot open, and keeps others from opening.

Half our artists are ruined for want of education, and by the possession of knowledge; the best that I have known have been *educated* and illiterate. The ideal of an artist, however, is not that he should be illiterate, but well read in the best books, and *thoroughly high-bred*, both in heart and in bearing. In a word, he should be fit for the best society, and should *keep out of it*.*

So much for the relation of Science to Art. Let us now hear Mr. Ruskin's definition of "Fine Art."

"It would be well if all students would keep clearly in their mind the real distinction between these words which we use so often, 'Manufacture,' 'Art,' and 'Fine Art.' 'Manufacture' is, according to the etymology and right use of the word, 'the making of any thing by hands,'—directly or indirectly, with or without the help of instruments or machines. Anything proceeding from the hand of man is manufacture; but it must have proceeded from his hand only, acting mechanically, and uninfluenced at the moment by direct intelligence.

Then, secondly, Art is the operation of the hand and the intelligence of man together: there is an art of making machinery; there is an art of building ships; an art of making carriages; and so on. All these, properly called Arts, but not Fine Arts, are pursuits in which the hand of man and his head go together, working at the same instant.

Then, Fine Art is that in which the hand, the head, and the *heart* of man go together.†

The intellectual spirit of the present day is doing great good in its own way; but the intellect *alone* is sure to mislead. Our present condition of mind tends too much toward undue exaltation of abstract intellectual speculation, and society will never apprehend the true meaning and use of Fine Art until it gets its *heart* open.

* "Stones of Venice."

† "Two Paths."